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Agriculture

Animal and  
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Inspection  
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### **APHIS Stakeholder Update**

In the wake of a Mediterranean fruit fly outbreak in Tijuana, Mexico, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), has taken a number of actions to ensure that no fruit flies make their way to the United States. This Stakeholder Update includes the latest information about the scope of the outbreak, efforts to combat the outbreak and trade restrictions implemented to protect American agriculture.

The outbreak was first identified on September 16, 2004, by trappers with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The Agency's International Services program maintains a year-round fruit fly trapping and surveillance effort in Northern Mexico to identify outbreaks before they have the opportunity to negatively affect the United States. This program exists because the Mediterranean fruit fly, commonly called the Medfly, is one of the world's most destructive agriculture pests. An outbreak can cost millions of dollars to eradicate and close trade markets resulting in even greater financial losses. The current outbreak is approximately 6.5 miles south of the U.S. border.

Since the Medflies were first detected in a residential area of southern Tijuana, APHIS has established more than 1,500 traps in an 81 square-mile area in Mexico surrounding the outbreak. In addition, California, Arizona and New Mexico have all increased the number of surveillance traps they have set up along the Mexican border. No Medflies have been detected in the United States, however, in Mexico APHIS has trapped 82 adult Medflies and 796 larvae. All of the detections have occurred in the 1-square mile area immediately surrounding the original detection.

To support trapping efforts in Mexico, fruit stripping is also occurring in this core area and on Sept. 26, the Mexican Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development Fisheries and Food began aerially spraying the pesticide Spinosad to kill any Medflies that haven't been trapped. In addition, Mexico is drenching the soil surrounding fruit trees in the core area with the pesticide diazinon to kill any pupae in the ground. Once these treatments are complete, APHIS will release sterile Medflies at the rate of about 3,700 per acre per week over the entire 81 square-mile area surrounding the outbreak and possibly beyond this range. The sterile male flies mate with female Medflies but the females don't produce any viable eggs thus halting the fruit flies' lifecycle.

While multiple efforts are underway to eradicate the outbreak in Tijuana, APHIS has also imposed trade restrictions to ensure that no infected host material is imported into the United States. These actions are necessary because at this time, Mexico has not imposed any quarantine measures. Trade restrictions affect host material arriving

at land border crossings in Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas, for border ports west of and including El Paso. All commercial shipments of Medfly host material require phytosanitary certificates documenting that the produce was grown, packed and stored outside the municipality of Tijuana. All shipments destined for Arizona and California border crossings must also arrive in sealed trucks. And finally, because the California border crossings are in such close proximity to the outbreak, Medfly host material will be confiscated from people entering the State from Mexico.

The Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection is enforcing these restrictions and has called on all personnel to serve with heightened awareness at the affected border crossings. These proactive measures at the borders, in combination with eradication efforts in Mexico, are safeguarding American agriculture and preventing the introduction of a pest that poses a serious threat to producers in the Southwest United States.